

REMARKS

As a preliminary matter, applicants appreciate the consideration given to Patrick G. Burns in a telephonic interview on November 10, 2004. Proposed claim amendments were discussed in connection with the McKendry et al. 6,706,012 reference cited in the office action. No agreement was reached, but the examiner indicated that the proposed claim amendments (now formally made in this amendment) likely avoid the '012 reference. The amendments made at this time are the same as the proposed claim amendments, except that the first and second outputs are now described as "at least one" first output and "at least one" second output.

As another preliminary matter, an Information Disclosure Statement citing Whittlestone et al. U.S.P.N. 4,607,596 is enclosed. The Whittlestone patent is described in the specification, and is cumulative to the '012 reference with respect to the present invention. The Whittlestone patent is being cited to assure compliance with the duty of disclosure. Additional references cited in a European Search Report are also cited in the enclosed Information Disclosure Statement.

Claims 3 and 4 have been amended to overcome the objection to the drawings, without narrowing the scope of the claims, or amending the drawings. Withdrawal is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-3 and 5-7 stand rejected under § 102 on the basis of McKendry et al. '012. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for the reasons discussed at the interview, which will be summarized here.

The '012 reference discloses a diaphragm pump having four outlets that feed four inlets through a connector 17 (Fig. 12) to two expressor kits 12, 14. There is no air circuit, as in the present invention.

Amended claim 1 now more clearly recites an air circuit that has an inlet, a first output and a second output. Both the first output and the second output are produced from the same inlet, the first and second outputs being bi-directional or intermittent, and unidirectional, respectively. This feature of the present invention allows one or more express kits to be used with a pump that produces bi-directional or intermittent air pressure, without needing the unidirectional air pressure produced by the pump in the '012 reference. For these reasons, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim 4 stands rejected under § 103 on the basis of McKendry et al. '012 and Meyers '921. Applicants traverse this rejection for the reasons given with respect to amended claim 1, and request withdrawal of this rejection, as well.

For the foregoing reasons, applicants believe that this case is in condition for allowance, which is respectfully requested. The examiner should call applicants' attorney if an interview would expedite prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

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